



Newark Education Council Update

AN ITERIM REPORT

1988

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INTRODUCTION

The Newark Education Council has made significant progress towards reaching its goal of assisting to develop and implement plans to improve the overall quality and effectiveness of Newark's public schools during 1988.

A major accomplishment is the increased levels of trust that has been established between the major stakeholders, Board of Education members and administrators and community representatives. Although every recommendation presented by the external task forces and steering committee has not been accepted in total, there is commitment to continue working together to identify major areas of concern and develop projects that will force systemic change.

As 1988 ends, the task forces continue to have a diverse membership who attempt to find common ground even when there are differing points of view.

The Task Force reports included in this document represent summaries of the work that was begun during this year and will continue into the next.

The task forces have researched the problems and then developed an ideal picture of the future. Although the problems identified in this document are not all inclusive, they represent what the task force members felt were most significant.

The Executive Superintendent of Schools has established internal committees comprised solely of Board of Education employees in an effort to mirror the work of the NEC task forces. These committees have been working to identify areas of concern from a staff point of view. Summaries of their work are not included in this document. However, Board of Education employees are members of each external task force and their points of view are represented in the direction taken by the Task Force.

Lastly, if any of the Task Forces and their focus appeal to you, feel free to contact *Brian Hemphill*, 649-4488 for more information and/or to become an active member.

Regina Marshall
Executive Director
December 13, 1988

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE TASK FORCE

MISSION

In order to have an impact on the equal educational opportunity of all students, the Academic Performance Task Force will gather information, define problems, assess and analyze needs, and make recommendations to the NEC Steering Committee and Board of Education, to provide direction in helping to improve the academic achievement of Newark students.

PROCESS

The procedure by which the task force gathered information entailed the following components:

- presentations from discussions with key Board of Education personnel: Dr. Jan Azumi, Division of Research, Testing and Evaluation; Mrs. Betty Ruffalo, Director of Curriculum Development; Mr. Connie Richards, Director of Chapter 1 Basic Skills; several classroom teachers from different schools; and other administrative personnel.
- an Academic Needs Assessment Survey, which asked teachers from seven schools to rate 32 different items in terms of their respective impact on the academic performance of students.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

Based on 176 survey respondents, the ten (10) items that teachers rated as having the greatest hindrance on the academic performance of their students were as follows:

1. student absenteeism
2. class size
3. child-study team referral and classification
4. teacher promotion of students below grade level
5. insufficient parent/teacher/principal involvement in curriculum development
6. administrative promotion of students below grade level
7. inadequate class preparation time
8. inconsistency between curriculum and mandated tests
9. poor communication between parents and teachers

10. physical conditions of classroom

After considerable discussion, several of these items were referred to other task forces for their consideration. Items 1, 5 and 9 were referred to the Outside Influences Task Force. Item 10 was referred to the Management and Decision Making Task Force.

Item 2--class size, and Item 7--class preparation time--were determined to be outside the scope of any task force at this time since 7 was included within the teacher's union contract and 2 was mandated by state law.

Items 3, 4, 6 and 8 will be retained by the Academic Performance Task Force for further review.

AREAS FOR FUTURE ACTION

Basic Skills

There are approximately 21,000 students (Pre-k thru 12) in the school system who are participating in basic skills remediation programs. This estimate includes all populations: bi-lingual, special education, etc. Student's participation in the basic skills programs is not related to a specific handicap, such as, physical, visual, limited English proficiency, orthopedic, but because of deficient basic skills, such as reading, or math competency. In essence, a student who has limited English proficiency could also participate in the basic skills programs.

The primary method currently utilized by the district to provide remedial instruction in the areas of reading, math or writing is pull-out. Students are removed from their regular classes or segregated within their classes during the confines of the school day in order to receive remedial assistance. The time allotment for basic skills remediation is at least 80 minutes a week, and varies depending on the needs of each student.

Priority areas for improvement seem to be:

- establishing better coordination and communication within each school between teachers and other faculty regarding the status of each student.
- developing an equitable scheduling system which would reduce the need for pull-outs.

Child Study Team Referral, Classification & Implementation Process

The Academic Performance Task Force has repeatedly encountered problems related to the Child Study Team process, in the course of all information gathering efforts relative to student academic performance. Due to the complexity and breadth of issues involved, the Task Force has recommended to the NEC Steering committee than an ad hoc committee be established to exclusively review this area.

District Promotional Policies For Elementary And Secondary Schools

Since two of the items among the top ten (10) in the Academic Needs Assessment Survey referred to the promotion of students within the district, the Academic Performance Task Force is currently reviewing the districts' promotional policies.

DROP OUT PREVENTION/RETENTION

MISSION

The task force on *Dropouts* was charged with identifying the root cause, key problems and issues which affect the high drop out rate in Newark. The goals of this group were to:

- develop a profile of the characteristics for students who had the potential for dropping out
- find workable solutions that could significantly affect the numbers of students dropping out in Newark
- analyze the factors involved in poor student attendance
- identify support systems and services (both positive and negative) that impact on the drop out problem
- review educational services that enable the potential drop out to remain in school
- sensitize the community to the magnitude of the dropout problem so that appropriate services can be developed to reduce the potential for dropping out in Newark

After analyzing the above mentioned issues, the task force will develop appropriate recommendations.

PROCESS

The Drop Out Prevention Task Force utilized a study group approach to analyze the drop out problem. To establish a common knowledge base and to identify the causes for dropping out, the task force initially utilized the Study Program for Community groups entitled *Dropping Out: Community-Based Alternatives* which was prepared by the Public Education Institute. In addition, the co-chairs prepared a package of literature for review and discussion which summarized the major theories about drop-outs. From each discussion, a summary of the major findings was compiled.

The task force invited professionals who either worked in alternative education programs or were involved in compiling statistical data for Newark's Board of Education to discuss the drop out situation and some programs developed to retain students in schools. A highlight of the task force's investigation was the presentations given by three former dropouts who had recently returned to school by attending a community-based organization alternative program. As a result of this extensive information gathering, the Drop Out Task Force utilized consultant, Deborah Cutchins, Ph.D., Rutgers University, to analyze their data and prepare a report for the task force's future use. A complete analysis of the problems and proposed recommendations is available from the Newark Education Council staff.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

As a result of their study, the Drop Out Task Force has identified the following as the major causes of students dropping out of school:

- being too old for their class
- curriculum not relevant to student needs
- peer pressure
- lack of basic skills

AREAS FOR FUTURE ACTION

Examine more thoroughly the actual programs of the Newark school district and determine if community-based programs can be utilized to ease the burden on the Newark schools.

Develop an outreach effort to get the community involved in solving the problem, especially the parents.

Investigate the feasibility of establishing a *Cities in Schools, Inc.* program model in Newark that could provide comprehensive services to potential dropouts.

INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL TASK FORCE

MISSION

Recognizing the importance of well-trained and highly motivated teachers, the mission of the Instructional Personnel Task Force will be to focus on methods of encouraging the professional development and creativity of all instructional personnel, as well as, empowering instructional personnel to assume leadership roles in Newark's school system in an effort to induce positive, systemic change in the city's classrooms.

PROCESS

Traditional information gathering methods have been used to investigate the situation of teachers in Newark schools. Current materials in the field of education were reviewed. Of particular interest to the task force was the latest report by the Carnegie Foundation, *An Imperiled Generation: Saving Urban Schools*.

Interviews were conducted with education specialists, including Education Consultant, Thomas Cocoran, formerly of Research for Better Schools, and Elsa M. Little of the Council for Basic Education.

The information gathering process was supplemented by drawing on the collective experiences of task force members and reviewing a report developed by the Employee Morale Improvement Committee from the Newark Board of Education.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

As a result of the task force's analysis, the problems which impact upon teachers have been defined as follows:

- control/decision making and accountability
- school and classroom climate
- professional preparation and recruitment
- professional development

- morale
- recognition/awards

Each of these areas has been studied by task force sub-groups. The information gathered will be compiled and available for review.

AREAS FOR FUTURE ACTION

The two areas of professional development and teacher recruitment have been identified for future action. Four short range programs will be studied for possible implementation related to the above-mentioned areas. They are the development of a:

- *Scholars in Teaching at Montclair State College* program to recruit high ability minority students for careers of teaching in Newark
- Summer Institute for teachers in conjunction with one of the area universities
- Teacher Cadet Program for high school students
- Transition Program for 9th grade teachers

In addition, the Instructional Personnel Task force plans to meet with the internal task force studying personnel issues to develop collaborative plans for short range goals.

MANAGEMENT AND DECISION MAKING

MISSION

The Management and Decision Making Task Force will focus on improving the quality of education in Newark Public Schools by working to improve the management and delivery of educational services in central administration and schools. The scope of the task force will include review of the organizational structure, staffing, policies, procedures and practices within the district.

PROCESS

1. Using group discussion and written reports, the members identified several areas of concern. These were:

- policies, procedures and practices of the central office
- facilities management and repair

- food service
- purchasing procedures
- policies, procedures and practices in local schools

2. After developing a document to outline their concerns about the district's efforts to seek a consultant to perform the management study, whose purpose was to examine ways to better distribute fiscal and human resources within the schools system, to help reduce administrative costs and improve the quality of educational services to students, the task force became a partner with senior Board of Education administrative staff on a Management Study Oversight Committee (MSOC). The purpose of the MSOC was to:

- revise the request for proposal
- interview and make a recommendation to the Executive Superintendent of a proposed consultant to conduct the management study
- monitor the consultant's approach to the study and make suggestions toward completion of study as needed.

3. Initiate discussions with Sam Martin and William Bellott of Newark Board of Education regarding new construction.

4. Initiate discussions between Board of Education facility staff and the buildings management department in New Jersey Bell.

5. Engage the Executive Superintendent in discussion with the Partnership for New Jersey to develop a management training program entitled *Management Assistance to Public Schools (MAPS)*.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

Although not conclusive, the problems were defined as:

- inadequate communications between central administration and schools
- limited long or short range planning
- age and condition of school buildings

AREAS FOR FUTURE ACTION

Management Study

In light of the Board of Education voting negatively on the consultant recommendation presented by the Management and Decision Making Task Force to the Executive Superintendent, the task force decided to investigate the area of communications and planning.

The Management and Decision Making Task Force is willing to continue in its role on the MSOC if the Executive Superintendent makes a recommendation for a management study and the Board of Education concurs.

Physical Facilities

The task force is presently facilitating a partnership between the director of physical facilities and the New Jersey Bell building management department to assist in streamlining certain procedures.

School-based Management

Research the advantages and disadvantages of school-based management programs and make recommendations for future implementation.

MAPS

Await feedback from the Executive Superintendent regarding his decision whether to use the Management Assistance to Public Schools (MAPS) program.

OUTSIDE INFLUENCES

MISSION

The Outside Influences Task Force is charged with the task of indentifying and researching the three most prevalent factors external to the education system which contribute to and those which detract from the education process.

The task force will propose for implementation long and short range programs and responses which will enhance and support those positive influences and which will counteract those negative factors which impede education.

PROCESS

Many procedures were used to understand the variety of influences outside of schools which affected a student's progress.

Discussions

Task Force members were involved in discussions to identify what they felt were the three or four most important positive and negative influences outside schools which impede or enhance education and learning inside school. Representation during these discussions were broad-based and included a school principal, an alternate school administrator, employees of community-based organizations and parents.

Negative influences identified:

- lack of understanding of education's role
- morals not taught/labels, i.e. *dropout* detrimental
- drugs and alcohol
- education not interesting--street offers more opportunity
- making money by selling drugs is greater than earning \$4.00/hr. at an entry-level job
- adolescent sex, venereal disease, AIDS, teen pregnancy
- interest in the Here and Now--no vision of the future
- housing
- lack of positive role models
- lack of health care
- poor nutrition and diet
- element of poverty

Positive influences identified:

- corporate investments (awards, positive role models)
- large metropolitan area
- business community
- cultural opportunity
- Renaissance Newark concept
- talent in Newark

Surveying

In order to verify or re-focus the member's beliefs of these outside factors, the group developed a survey. The survey, although

not statistically significant, was distributed to approximately 300 students, 35 parents and 35 teachers within Newark. The populations included summer school and enrichment class students, parents from community-based organizations and teachers in all settings mentioned. Each respondent was asked to identify using a scale of 1-5 which factors had a negative and/or a positive effect on a student's performance in schools.

Presentations

In addition, the Task Force actively sought new members that would make their group more representative of Newark's community. Presentations were given by each new member of their respective program and responsibilities.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

Three areas of concern were elicited as a result of the group discussions and confirmed by the survey. These were:

- The use of drugs/alcohol in and around schools
- Parent involvement in schools
- Community involvement in schools.

However, the most significant outcome from the survey was the strong community interest it generated. Questions elicited concerned the future uses of the survey and indicated interest in people becoming more involved in the work of the task force.

AREAS FOR FUTURE ACTION

Review of a variety of program models used to attack the types of problems identified. Development of a series of recommendations which will cover the spectrum of student needs.

The Task Force will discuss programs such as *Youth at Risk* sponsored by the Breakthrough Foundation, *Cities in Schools, Inc.* and other existing program models.

Participation in school-based meetings with parents to encourage their involvement in schools and with their youngsters.

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

MISSION

Rooted in the belief that all children can learn, the Preschool Education Task Force is committed to advocating that children, ages birth through grade three, be given the opportunity to learn in a safe, stimulating environment that fosters creative and critical thinking and recognizes the developmental needs of young children.

PROCESS

The task force gathered information about the needs of young children in the following manner:

1. Review of the data developed after the first nineteen years of Head Start, as well as, programmatic information from other school districts which have early childhood divisions. In addition, *The Carnegie Foundation Special Report, An Imperiled Generation--Saving Urban Schools* recommended that every school give priority to the early years; have a clearly defined curriculum, provide a program of coordinated services, and be a safe, attractive place with good equipment and adequate resources for learning.

2. Presentations/discussions with Rosa Langston, Director, Office of Children, City of Newark; Margaret McLeod, Acting Director, Newark Preschool Council; Ms. Vivian Lampkin, Assistant Superintendent, Newark Board of Education to gain information about the scope of services currently being provided in Newark to preschool and kindergarten children from birth to age eight.

3. Group discussions with kindergarten teachers from the Newark school district about programming, curriculum and characteristics of children enrolled.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

As a result of their information gathering, the task force members identified the following problems in delivering service to children aged birth--through grade three:

- limited Head Start programming available
- lack of coordination among service providers and within the board of Education

- need for early registration for kindergarten
- need for full day kindergarten programming
- *pacing* involved in kindergarten programming does not relate to developmental needs of young children
- staff development not geared to teachers of young children
- limited parental involvement in the education of young children.

AREAS FOR FUTURE ACTION

The Preschool Task Force of the Newark Education Council has recommended to the Steering Committee and the Executive Superintendent that a Division of Early Childhood Education be established within the Newark Public School system to address the developmental and educational needs of Newark's preschool aged children.

In addition, this task force has requested that the Executive Superintendent appoint this task force to become an advisory committee to the assistant director for early childhood education and assist the personnel to develop a comprehensive program within the Board of Education.

Lastly, the task force will develop an approach to publicize the need to register early for kindergarten classes to begin September 1989 and implement such plan in conjunction with the Board of Education Public Information Office.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH/COMMUNICATIONS

MISSION

The Community Outreach/Communications committee was charged to develop an outreach plan that would help the NEC to:

- publicize the NEC in general
- involve parents in the school system
- involve community leaders in task forces
- enable stakeholders to be involved in each step of the process

- collect feedback from the community about proposed changes
- promote the value of education
- design communications to various groups

PROCESS

The committee discussed many goals it wanted considered in a comprehensive outreach plan.

An initial brochure *Questions and Answers about the NEC* was compiled and distributed.

A consultant was hired to facilitate a group discussion which resulted in a variety of means for increasing parent involvement in schools and in the NEC process.

The committee also met with Christine Vogel of Newark Mediaworks for special sessions to identify and prioritize its goals and objectives. From these sessions, a request for proposal, which is being distributed by the NEC, was prepared and is available to any interested individual or firm.

Final date for submission of proposals is Friday, January 6, 1989.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

Problems in developing a comprehensive community/outreach communication plan were:

- lack of current parent participation in schools
- participation in NEC activities could preclude participation in Board of Education activities

AREAS FOR FUTURE ACTION

Implement school based meetings in conjunction with local school improvement teams.

Review proposals received and select a public relations consultant who would develop a public relations plan for NEC.

Implement proposed public relations plan through use of in-kind and staff activities.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Stakeholders

Mayor, City of Newark

President, Municipal Council

President, Board of Education

Executive Superintendent

Board of Education

Asst. Superintendent of Schools,
Archdiocese of Newark

Board Labor Unions

Local 3

Local 68

CASA

IBEW, Local 52

NTA

NTU

OPEIW/AEA

SIU-Local 617

Corporate Community

New Jersey Bell

The Prudential

AT&T

Kay Research, Inc.

Q, Inc.

Chamber of Commerce

College Community

NJIT

Rutgers University - Newark

University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey

Essex County College

Commissioner, NJ State Department of Education

Chair, Newark Collaboration Group

Foundation

Victoria Foundation

Newark Literacy Campaign

School Partnership Program

Community Representatives

Chair, Chapter I Advisory Council

Chair, Secondary Parents Council

Chair, School Senate

ASPIRA

Chair, Greater Newark Renaissance Group

Chair, Newark Coalition of Neighborhoods

MEM/Project Schools

Chair, Central Ward Coalition of Youth Services

FOCUS

La Casa de Don Pedro

Newark Preschool Council

Protestant Community Centers, Inc.

QUEST/CYO

St. Columba Neighborhood Club

United Community Corporation

NEC Task Force Chairs

District Representatives

West

Parent

Unified Vailsberg Service Organization

East

Parent

Independence High School

Central

Parent

International Youth Organization

North

Parent

Youth Consultation Services

South

Parent

The Leaguers, Inc.

TASK FORCES MEMBERSHIP

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Chairs: James Ramsey, Rutgers University

Peter Ruccione, School Partnership Program

Sister Shirley Corbliss, Science High School

Anasa Maat

Diamond Navarro, Newark Board of Education

Michael Porcello, NTU

Joanne Pugliese, Newark Board of Education

DROP OUT PREVENTION/RETENTION

Chairs: Joan Lazar, Newark Literacy Campaign

Wanda Jeanty, International Youth Organization

Maryam Bey, Project Schools/School Senate

Mildred Davis, Madison Avenue School

Frances Harold, Abington Avenue School

Anthony Imperitrice, New Jersey Bell

Charles Mitchell, Newark Board of Education

Don Nicholas, Newark Board of Education

Rosemary Reed, Barringer Preparatory School

Abbie Stebbins, Family Service

INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL

Chairs: Pamela Morgan, Newark Board of Education

Robert Pines, Montclair State College

Lillian Baldwin, Newark Board of Education

Lisa Bing, The Prudential

Rosemary Gomez, Broadway Elementary School

Janice Griffin, The Prudential

Willie Hutcherson, NTU

Joyce Moore, Central High School

Mattie Randolph, Camden Middle School

MANAGEMENT AND DECISION MAKING

C. Stephen Jones, Project Schools

Pietro Petino, NTU

Vincent Altieri, NTU

Patricia Bradford, Chapter I Advisory Council

Angela Caruso, Newark Board of Education

Deborah Cutchins, Rutgers University

JoAnn Dixon, Q, Inc.

Gene Foti, Newark Board of Education

Steve Gould, New Jersey Bell

Daniel Gutmore, Newark Board of Education

Stephen Heller, New Jersey Bell

V. Gioia Kay, Kay Research, Inc.

OUTSIDE INFLUENCES

Chairs: Dorothy Knauer, Protestant Community Centers, Inc.

James Wright, Central High School

Lucille Bush

Jerry Caprio, NJ Department of Human Services/DYFS

*Geraldine Clark, State of NJ Martin Luther King, Jr.
Commemorative Commission*

Moses E. Cobb, Morton Street School
Michelle Daniels, Newark Youth At Risk
Maura FitzMorris, Enterprise Jobs of Newark
David Guerrero, La Casa de Don Pedro
Antionette Hill, Unified Vailsburg Services Organization
Walter Jackson, Inroads of New Jersey, Inc.
Myra Jacobs, International Youth Organization
Walter Kauzka, Central High School
Gerina Lewis
Mary O'Malley, The Prudential
Joan Reeves, NJ Department of Human Services/DYFS
Carmen M. Rodriquez, Newark Youth At Risk
Martin E. Rodgers, Independance High School
Patricia Shipman, Central High School
Delores Smith, Project Schools
Olga L. Vasquez, La Casa de Don Pedro

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

Chair: Vernell Farrand

Patricia Barret, Morton Street School
Mildred Ceceri
Julie Micou Cerf, Florence and John Schumann Foundation
Barbara Fridy, Cleveland Street School
Betty Lee Haggerty, Mutual Benefit Life
Vivian Lampkin, Newark Board of Education
Rosa Langston, Newark Office for Children
Noah Marshall, Harriet Tubman School
Catherine McFarland, Victoria Foundation
Margaret McLeod, Newark Preschool Council
Marcia Schoolmaster, Newark Office for Children

Marilyn Trushell, Camden Street Elementary School

Anita Tur, NTU

Gloria Washington, Newark Preschool Council

W. Frankie Whye, Harriet Tubman School